

**Amendments to the Claims:**

A listing of the entire set of pending claims (including amendments to the claims, if any) is submitted herewith per 37 CFR 1.121. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently amended) A method of determining proximity of a target node to a source node, comprising:

preparing a first response at the target node prior to receiving any part of a query from the source node,

communicating ~~a~~ the query from the source node to the target node;

communicating ~~a~~ the first response from the target node to the source node, immediately after the query is received and before the query is ~~decrypted~~ processed at the target node;

receiving the first response at the source node;

processing the query at the target node to produce therefrom a second response that facilitates a verification of the target node and its first response;

communicating the second response from the target node to the source node;

determining a measure of communication time between communicating the query and receiving the first response; and

determining the proximity of the target node based on the measure of communication time.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the query and at least one of the first and second responses correspond to at least a portion of a cryptographic key-exchange protocol.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the key-exchange protocol corresponds to a Needham-Schroeder key-exchange protocol.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the query and at least one of the first and second responses correspond to at least a portion of an OCPS protocol.
5. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the query includes an encryption of an item based on a public key of the target node, and  
the processing of the query includes decrypting the item based on a private key of the target node, for inclusion in the second response.
6. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the first response includes a random number, and  
the processing of the query further includes encrypting the item and the random number using a public key of the source node to form at least a portion of the second response.
7. (Original) The method of claim 5, wherein the first response includes an encryption of a random number based on a public key of the source node.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein determining the proximity includes comparing the communication time to a threshold value that distinguishes between local and remote nodes.
9. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including restricting communications with the target node based on the proximity.
10. (Original) The method of claim 1, further including restricting access of the target node to system resources based on the proximity.

11. (Currently amended) A node on a network including:  
a processor that is configured to prepare a first response at the node prior to receiving any part of a query from a source node,  
a communication device that is configured to:  
receive a the query from a the source node, ~~and to~~  
transmit a the first response ~~that facilitates~~ to facilitate proximity verification of the node, to the source node immediately upon receipt of the query and before the query is ~~decrypted~~ processed, and  
transmit a second response that facilitates a verification of the node to the source node; and  
a the processor ~~that~~ is configured to process the query and produce therefrom the second response.

12. (Original) The node of claim 11, wherein the processor is configured to process the query and produce the response as part of a cryptographic key-exchange protocol.

13. (Original) The node of claim 12, wherein the key-exchange protocol corresponds to a Needham-Schroeder key-exchange protocol.

14. (Original) The node of claim 11, wherein the query and at least one of the first and second responses correspond to at least a portion of an OCPS protocol initiated by the source node.

15. (Original) The node of claim 11, wherein the query includes an encryption of an item based on a public key of the node, and the processor is configured to decrypt the item based on a private key of the node, for inclusion in the second response.

16. (Original) The node of claim 15, wherein the first response includes a random number, and the processor is configured to encrypt the item and the random number using a public key of the source node to form at least a portion of the second response.

17. (Original) The node of claim 15, wherein the first response includes an encryption of a random number based on a public key of the source node.

18. (Currently amended) A node on a network including:

a communication device that is configured to:  
transmit a query to a target node, ~~and to~~  
receive an immediate first response that has been prepared before receipt of any part of the query by the target node and transmitted by the target node before the query is processed at the target node-decrypted, and  
receive a second response from the target node; and  
a processor that is configured to:  
measure a communication time between transmitting the query and receiving the first response,  
determine a proximity of the target node relative to the node based on the communication time, and  
verify the target node based on the second response.

19. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the processor is configured to generate the query and process at least one of the first and second responses as part of a cryptographic key-exchange protocol.

20. (Original) The node of claim 19, wherein the key-exchange protocol corresponds to a Needham-Schroeder key-exchange protocol.

21. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the query and at least one of the first and second responses correspond to at least a portion of an OCPS protocol initiated by the node.

22. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the query includes an encryption of an item based on a public key of the target node, and the second response includes a decryption of the item based on a private key of the target node.

23. (Original) The node of claim 22, wherein the first response includes a random number, and the second response includes an encryption of the decryption of the item and the random number, using a public key of the node.

24. (Original) The node of claim 23, wherein the second response further includes a signature of the decryption of the item and the random number, using a private key of the target node.

25. (Original) The node of claim 22, wherein the first response includes an encryption of a random number based on a public key of the node.

26. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the processor is configured to determine the proximity based on a comparison of the communication time to a threshold value that distinguishes between local and remote nodes.

27. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the processor is further configured to control subsequent communications with the target node based on the proximity.

28. (Original) The node of claim 18, wherein the processor is further configured to control access of the target node to system resources based on the proximity.